



Cheryl at Workforce Development Board SDA-83 Inc.
Northeast Louisiana Professional Healthcare Opportunities-Careers And Support (PHOCAS)
Monroe, LA

A dream deferred, but not denied.



Cheryl knew from a very young age that she wanted a job in healthcare.
Cheryl's mother was a registered nurse and an Associate Professor of Nursing
at the University Of Texas School Of Nursing at the Texas Medical Center.

In high school, she decided she wanted to be a nurse like her mother, and applied to the High School for Health Professions in Houston, Texas. Soon after her acceptance, Cheryl was dealt a devastating blow. Her mother passed away from cancer that May.

Before she knew it, three decades had gone by, and Cheryl had given birth to 4 children and gotten married. Cheryl had long impressed upon her children the importance of a college education. She told them as soon as they left home for college she would go back to school.

Cheryl was working at a clinical laboratory facility, making around \$19.00 an hour. But then, she developed health problems that prevented her from working. After regaining her health, she wanted to enjoy her freedom, pushing off her education once again. Her son was pursuing his second Master's Degree when he asked, "Mom, what are you waiting for?" With an empty house, she started her journey to become a nurse at the age of 49.

Cheryl moved to Monroe, Louisiana after her first semester of school in Houston to assist in caring for her grandson. She enrolled at Louisiana Delta Community College (LDCC) and applied for the Associate Degree Nursing Program after completing her prerequisites. However, recurring health issues and a limited income caused a great deal of stress. Cheryl found out about the PHOCAS Program from the assistant to the Nursing Director at LDCC.

PHOCAS became an integral part of Cheryl's success. It alleviated a great deal of stress. In addition to tuition assistance, PHOCAS covered the cost of books, uniforms, tutoring, and gas cards to offset the cost of transportation to school. The support from PHOCAS wasn't only financial. Cheryl also found a network of encouragement from the

PHOCAS staff. Cheryl states, "Along with the financial support, the words of encouragement and support received from Vicki Lofstrom, LDCC PHOCAS Coordinator and Kris Nelson, PHOCAS Student Liaison were priceless. I am so grateful for the [PHOCAS Program](#) and would hate to think of what it would have been like if I had not had it. I am so very glad I did not have to find out."

Cheryl graduated from LDCC's Associate Degree Nursing Program and passed her Louisiana State Board of Nursing exam. She is now employed as a registered nurse at St. Francis Medical Center, earning \$23.50 an hour. Cheryl fulfilled her promise to her children and is finally living her lifelong dream as a nurse.

"My greatest joy from this journey by far is the interaction with my grandchildren along the way. They have been my cheerleaders, my inspiration, and my motivation through this very difficult, yet rewarding road to the successful completion of nursing school. They have seen Granny with her rolling suitcase of "homework" on visits for birthdays, holidays, and spring break. Hopefully they have learned by watching me, the value of hard work, of never giving up, and that a dream deferred does not mean denied."

This success story was self-identified by the grantee and information contained in this document was provided by the grantee.